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The time has come for a thorough examination of the role of the United States Government in aiding, protecting and collaborating with Nazi war criminals after World War II.

The Klaus Barbie case is only the latest episode in the astounding — and still unfolding — story of Government relations with Nazi war criminals. Mr. Barbie, former Gestapo chief of Lyons, France, was employed by United States officials after World War II, shielded by them from war crimes trials in France and spirited away to sanctuary in South America.

Now the Justice Department has decided, under intense pressure, to investigate the United States' role in this case. Such an investigation will no doubt be useful. But because Mr. Barbie was only one of many Nazi war criminals American authorities aided, it is not enough. There must be a much broader investigation — one that will examine the full scope of American assistance to Nazi war criminals living here and abroad. Only by such an inquiry and by full disclosure can we understand how these shameful and secret misdeeds of our Government came about, and prevent their recurrence.

While a member of Congress working to insure Government action against suspected Nazi war criminals, I encountered a number of official United States connections with them. For example, in 1978, the General Accounting Office found that more than 20 alleged Nazi war criminals living in the United States had been employed by Government agencies that knew of the allegations against them. These included the State Department, Defense Department, Central Intelligence Agency and Federal Bureau of Investigation. Radio Liberty, funded by the C.I.A. until 1971, also employed

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Examine U.S. Aid To Nazi Criminals

By Elizabeth Holtzman

a number of people accused of committing war crimes. Radio Free Europe, another C.I.A.-funded operation, invited Valerian Trifa to appear on two broadcasts. Mr. Trifa was then under charges by the Justice Department for concealing his activities as head of the fascist Student Iron Guard in Rumania. He has agreed to leave the country.

In addition, Gustav Hilger, deputy to Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, who worked with the *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing units responsible for murdering 1.5 million Jews in the Ukraine and Eastern Europe, was secretly brought here by the C.I.A. And the role of the State Department in bringing to America almost the entire Nazi puppet government in Byelorussia, where more than 247,000 Jews were murdered, is documented in a recent book by a former lawyer for the Justice Department's special unit charged with investigating and deporting Nazi war criminals. To compound the problem, for more than 25 years United States officials generally failed to act against suspected Nazi war criminals living in America, thus providing them with a haven.

The passage of legislation in 1978 to authorize the deportation of Nazi war criminals living among us and bar

their entry, and the creation in 1979 of a centralized, professional prosecution team at the Justice Department to investigate and deport them, helped put an end to the years of inaction. With these mechanisms in place, it is time for this country to review thoroughly the still unanswered questions concerning United States dealings with Nazi war criminals.

This investigation should be conducted by a special commission, authorized by Congress, independent of the executive branch and with full subpoena powers. It should seek to determine how and why war criminals got here and how they were permitted to remain virtually undisturbed until 1974. The officials who brought Nazis to this country and shielded them for more than a quarter of a century — and the process by which this was permitted to occur — must be exposed.

In addition, the Barbie case suggests ties between Government agencies and the large group of Nazi war criminals who escaped to South America after the war. If Klaus Barbie got American aid, did Josef Mengele, Auschwitz's murderous "doctor," who carried out inhuman experiments on concentrate camp inmates? Did others? These are no abstract questions of remote historical interest. The protection of Nazi mass murderers mocks the sacrifice of the Americans who fought Hitler, and of his victims. It suggests an acceptance of the premise that the ends justify the means, that expediency is the only morality.

Americans have demonstrated a strong sense of decency and justice. It was this sense that led to creation of the commission that looked into the decision to intern Americans of Japanese descent during the war. This same dedication should inspire us to explore — and, in doing so, expunge — the disgraceful history of our Government's relations with Nazi war criminals in this country and elsewhere.